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Nixon, Admiral Radford
on Quemoy and Matsu

By JAMES RESTON

NEW YORK, Oct. 20.—It is unfortunate, and unfair to Vice President Nixon that his name is now being associated with Admiral Arthur W. Radford in the controversy over the defense of Quemoy and Matsu.

For while no man in America has been more involved in the Chinese offshore islands question than Admiral Radford, his views on China are undoubtedly more extreme than any ever held by the Vice President.

Admiral Radford was one of the great officers of the last war. He is a patriot in the finest sense of that much abused word. But he has a view of the China question which is controversial to say the least.

This is that the unification of China under communism is an intolerable menace to the United States, and, as he has repeatedly said in the presence of this reporter among others, that we should be willing to fight for fifty years if necessary rather than acquiesce in the domination of Communist power on the China mainland.

Against this background, which is well known in Washington, it clearly does not help the Vice President's campaign when Admiral Radford appears at Nixon headquarters as a military adviser, talks to Mr. Nixon as he did today, and then announces that Senator Kennedy's policy on Quemoy and Matsu might lead to war.

Senator Kennedy, of course, has himself to blame for bringing this question into the Presidential campaign. In effect he has initiated a discussion of the war plans of the United States, and while he would now like to drop it Mr. Nixon and Admiral Radford are apparently determined to keep it alive.

The Historical Background

Accordingly, a little history may help clarify the issue. Admiral Radford was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the 1954-55 crisis over Quemoy and Matsu. He took the position then, as he does now, that the defense of these islands is a matter of principle.

Secretary of State Dulles was away when this matter came to a head, and the Under Secretary of State was Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff during the last world war. General Smith opposed Admiral Radford.

He argued that the defense of these islands should be maintained, if possible, but that it was not a question of principle but a question of military tactics.

To defend the islands as a matter of principle, as Admiral Radford wanted to do, and as Vice President Nixon suggested during the second debate with Kennedy, meant defending it against any kind of attack.

What if the Chinese Communists switched from artillery to aerial bombardment? The only sure way to stop this would be to engage the Communist bombers over the China mainland and to attack the mainland bases from which they took off.

Did we want to do this? Admiral Radford took the position that we should, if necessary, but the State Department was opposed, and President Eisenhower went along with State.

Admiral Radford's views on this were so well known on Capitol Hill at the time that Senator Walter George, then Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, insisted that the defense of Quemoy and Matsu be left vague only if the President himself agreed to take the decision to defend the islands rather than leaving it to any subordinate officer. This stipulation was made by Senator George primarily because Admiral Radford's views about the China question were widely known and opposed on Capitol Hill.

Why, in the face of all this, the Vice President is now giving the impression of a close link to Admiral Radford is not clear. He is contradicting for the rest of the campaign on the populous states from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic, where the policies of Admiral Radford on China have never been very popular.

It is widely believed that Mr. Nixon must in these last three weeks hold his Republican supporters and appeal to independents and Democrats on foreign policy if he is to win.

Yet he went to Miami this week and revived the cry that Korea was "war they would not let us win." Now, either by accident or design, he is giving the impression that he is in cahoots with Admiral Radford, whose opinions have been set to William Knowland's and Styles Bridges' in the past and have been to Mr. Nixon's.